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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8924
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RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY 9013

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STATE INR/R/MR; IIP/R/MR; WHA/PD

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SUBJECT: Media Reaction - Global Economy: climate change and environment; Western Hemisphere: Venezuela, Chavez, re-election referendum; Iraq: troop levels; Sao Paulo

From Apocalypses and heroes

Op-Ed in liberal A Folha de S. Paulo (2/4) by Clovis Rossi states: "This year has everything to become one in which we either avoid the apocalypse or end up finally diving into it....At the end of the year, there will be a conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, to decide how to fight climate change and how to avoid that global warming becomes the second 'big bad wolf' of the year [the first being the economic crisis]. It is true that some people still think that the climate 'big bad wolf' is not as ugly as it seems. But it would be a tremendous irresponsibility to wait not doing anything and see if global warming wreaks havoc or not. Reducing gas emissions will benefit human beings, and that is obvious."

Chavez does everything to perpetuate himself in power

Editorial in business oriented Valor Economico (2/4) says: "....Chavez's good times have past with the debacle of oil prices from US\$147 in July to around US\$40 nowadays....Chavism only survives thanks to the rising in public spending to support its social programs and to the nationalization of companies. With the tough hit in revenues caused by tumbling oil prices, the government will have to tighten its belt and cut expenses, which will erode its popularity....To Chavez, obtaining unlimited reelection is a decisive move. He demanded the voting to take place as soon as possible, while the burden of the international financial crisis still has not reached the entire country. Chavez will do everything he can to defeat it, by any means."

President Obama and the paradox with Johnson

Op-Ed in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (2/4) by Alexandre Barros, PhD., Political Science, University of Chicago, states: "[former President Lyndon Johnson] became famous for the disastrous escalation of the Vietnam War....The reasoning for the Iraq withdrawal is very similar to the one employed in Vietnam....There is a great chance that [President Barack] Obama and his close advisors will be forced to make bureaucratic concessions in foreign policy, just like Johnson was....Maybe Obama....will be forced to pay less attention to international issues if he wants to save his administration (and an eventual reelection) and will have to focus more on domestic issues, trying to escape from the Johnson paradox....Let us hope that Obama has good memory, reads good History books and shows a lot of stamina to implement the agenda for which he was elected."

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